

386 SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

limited to a minority of the reading public. Besides, it is usually possible to transmit in a translation, at least in essential particulars, the lesson which, a book is intended to convey. But at the same time much is lost, and in a good many instances translations which have even taken rank as literature do not adequately represent their originals. At the present day, with respect to contemporary works, excellence in translation is scarcely to be obtained, for commercial conditions militate against it. An author may give years to the writing of a book, whereas the English translator is compelled to prepare his version in a few months, at times even in a few weeks, for it is often stipulated by the publisher that the translation must appear at the same time as the original. It may be necessary also for the English translator to attend to some serial publication, and to provide for copyright in America, with the result that the work has to be done hastily, in a rough and ready manner. Again, the prices paid for translations are usually so low that few men of real ability are willing to undertake them. The writer, though he has had great experience in these matters, can suggest no remedy, for undoubtedly the commercial as well as the literary side of the question has to be considered, and even if a translator, regardless of gain, were to bestow on his work all the time

and care it might deserve, the chances
would be that no
publisher would look at it, for the market would
be gone —
so swiftly do even very able books perish in
these modern
days.

With respect to the writer's own work, as
translator or
as editor of various English versions of Zola's
novels, he is
fully aware of its many imperfections, due
in some in-